Michael Dubreuil
Colchester, Connecticut

June 29, 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Finance,

At your June 25th meeting, you discussed the idea of sending formal questions to the Board of Education about post-budget-passage changes—particularly the sizable raises. I support a follow-up meeting with the BOE, but I believe this oversight effort must continue through the term of this Board of Finance as well. Transparency doesn't come from a one-time conversation—it requires sustained attention.

The Board of Education constantly talks about "transparency" and "trust." It was a theme at their May retreat, and years ago they even created a Pride & Purpose subcommittee called "Trust, Image, and Perception." But let's be honest: it's all talk. The BOE hasn't taken any meaningful action to actually *earn* the public's trust—and that's exactly the problem. Words are cheap; behavior matters. Their conduct after the budget passed only reinforced what many already suspect: they don't act with integrity.

I was also stunned that the BOE Chairwoman would even ask why citizens like me don't engage more directly with their board. The answer is simple—we're ignored or stonewalled when we ask questions, and sometimes even attacked. The public is routinely shut out. They won't even allow citizen comments unless they're tied to an agenda item. At their budget workshops they routinely ignore inconvenient citizens' questions. That's not how you build trust. You build it with openness, accountability, and respectful engagement.

Moving forward, I propose that the Board of Education present their monthly financial report to the Board of Finance—just as the town Finance Director does. That report should include all budget transfers and a current expenditure report. They already create the reports but present them to no one. There's nothing in the statutes requiring them to present this to your board, but a gesture like that—voluntarily offering transparency—would go a long way toward repairing the growing trust deficit between the school system's leadership and the people they serve.

Sincerely,
Michael Dubreuil